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OMCT
OPERATING THE SOS-TORTURE NETWORK

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**Case IDN/TMP 041296.1**
**Follow-up of case IDN/TMP 041296**

The International Secretariat of OMCT has received new information on the following situation in **East Timor**.

**Brief reminder of the of the situation:**

The international Secretariat was informed, by reliable sources, of the presumed disappearance on 25 November 1996 of Mr **Pantaleao Rosario PIRES** and his brother Mr **Joao Rangel R PIRES**.

Mr **Pantaleao Rosario PIRES** and his brother Mr **Joao Rangel R PIRES**, from the village of Maabat Vila in Manatuto, were arrested when returning home after allegedly attending a demonstration in Dili in support of Bishop Belo. It was believed that they had been accused of organising the demonstration. However, the information suggested, they might had been arbitrarily arrested for taking part in a peaceful demonstration. Their whereabouts were unknown.

The demonstration on 25 November was a peaceful pro-independence demonstration which was attended by at least 400 youths who gathered in front of the Catholic Diocese building in Dili to show their support for Bishop Belo.

**New information**:

According to the new information received on **Pantaleao Rosario PIRES**, he was taken into police custody with his brother but was released the same day. He was required to report every day to the police headquarters in Dili between 28 November 1996 to 11 January 1997.

However, according to the new information, Mr **Joao Rangel R PIRES** was convicted on 30 March, 1997, of publicly displaying materials which insult the president and or the Vice-president (Article 134, KUHP). He was been sentenced to one year imprisonment and has been detained at the Becora Prison in Dili. Mr **Joao Rangel R PIRES** has lodged an appeal to the High Court claiming that he had an unfair trail as there were no witnesses and evidence.

**Remarks:**

This case raises the concern of the International Secretariat about the restrictions on freedom of expression in East Timor as the information suggests that Mr Joao Rangel R PIRES has been convicted solely for peacefully expressing his views.

The International Secretariat would like to thank all the members of the network and all other organizations and individuals for the action undertaken following our appeals.

Geneva, 3 June 1997